



Improving Life  
Opportunities for  
Youth, Families,  
and Communities  
of Color

# The Role of Community in Racial Disparities Reduction

Louisville, Kentucky

August 11, 2011



# GOALS of System-Community Partnership

**Community** – a group which is organically formed by the intimate connections of history, heritage, spirituality, language and identity.  
(Definitions from Participant's Dialogue: African American and Native Elders, Minnesota)



**Shared decision making with families and impacted communities of color**



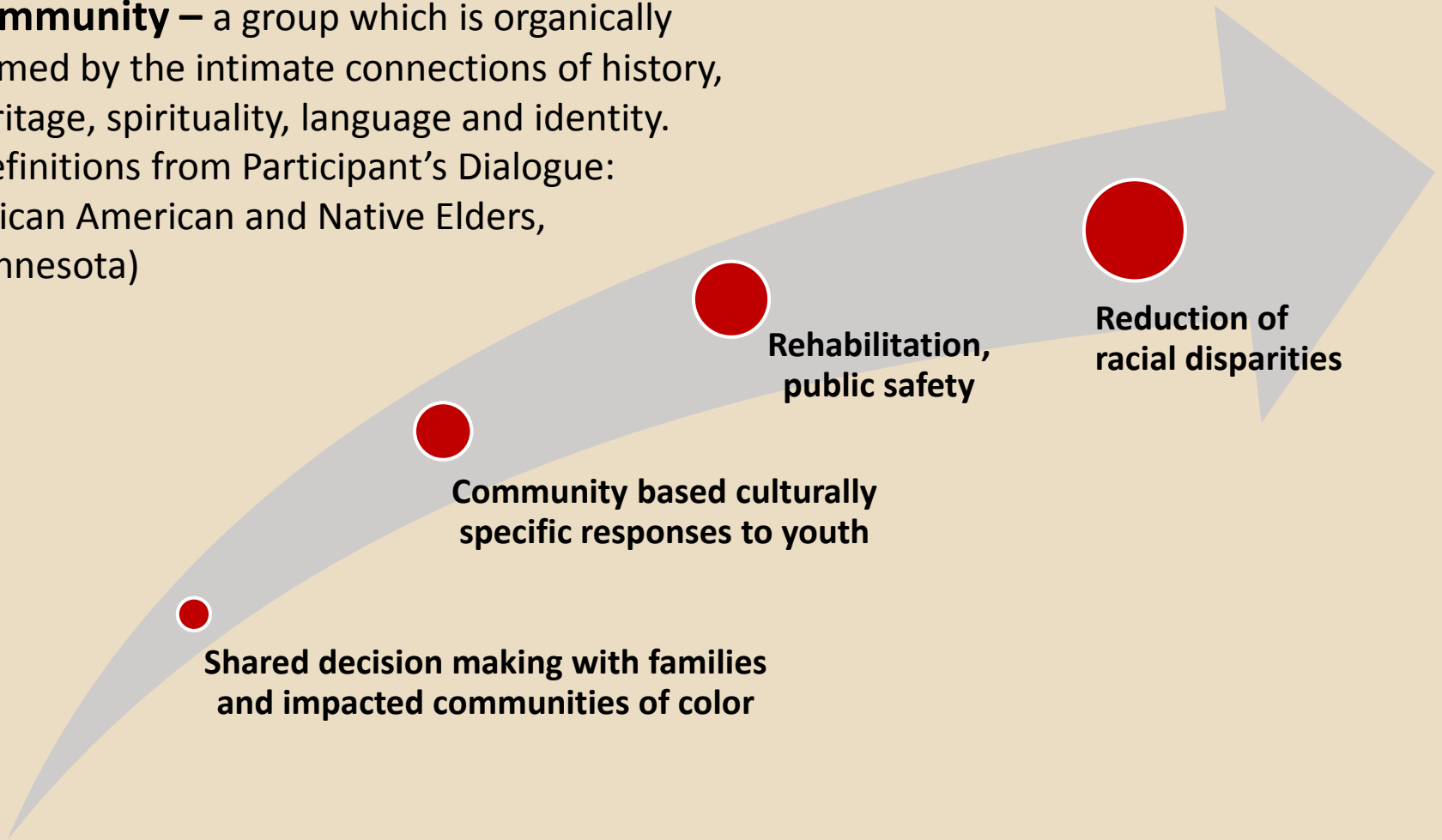
**Community based culturally specific responses to youth**



**Rehabilitation, public safety**



**Reduction of racial disparities**



## OVERALL CONCLUSION

There exists a fundamental difference in world views between communities of color and governing systems.

These fundamentally different world views underlie many of the difficulties of developing and maintaining community-institutional partnerships.

If community-institutional partnerships are to become effective (where they build upon the strengths of both partners), these fundamental differences must be addressed throughout the process of partnering.

[Cultural Wellness Center: Community-Institutional Partnerships: “Partnering for Parity “ Conference -June 3 , 2011 ]

# Outcomes of Community Inclusion

## ■ Roles of Community Partners:

- Educate systems on the experiences of children, families and neighborhood
- Educate systems on community resources to support children
- Partners in designing reforms to eliminate disparities
- Organizers in support of reform and rallying local interventions
- Educators to impacted communities on the juvenile justice system and reforms
- Providers of alternatives to incarceration
- Barometers of the efficacy of policy and practice change in relationship to community culture and access

## ■ Results:

- New policies and practice that lead to equitable outcomes
- Policies and practice responsive to the community and culture (community impact statements)
- Change in organization's culture to align with community inclusion and participation = **equal partnership**

# Process of Inclusion

- **Mutuality in relationship:**
  - **Definition of problem**
  - **Expected outcomes**
  
- **Build on individual strengths**
  - **Institutions**
    - Resources
    - Finances
    - Technical knowledge and data-driven
    - Political power
  
  - **Community Organizations**
    - Connections to and knowledge of community
    - Engagement of community members
    - Cultural knowledge and experiential
    - Cultural healing

[Cultural Wellness Center: Community-Institutional Partnerships: "Partnering for Parity Conference - June 3 , 2011 ]

- **Process is as important as the outcomes – TRUST**
  - In many cases, the process is a product
- **Community members involved in developing strategies *and* in evaluating successes**
- **Accountability and learning goes both ways**
- **Recognition of power differentials with attempts to decrease them**

[Cultural Wellness Center: Community-Institutional Partnerships: “Partnering for Parity Conference - June 3 , 2011 ]

- **Listening**
- **Truth-Telling**
- **Self-Study**
- **Trust**
- **Preserving the Heart and Spirit of Community**
- **Recognition and Honoring of Differences**

[Cultural Wellness Center: Community-Institutional Partnerships: "Partnering for Parity Conference - June 3 , 2011 ]

# The Ramsey County Story



## Community as Organizers and Alternative Providers

# Ramsey County Community Engagement

- African American and Hmong Communities had history of partnering with Ramsey County
- In 2005, County Board of Commissioners endorsed implementation of JDAI to address DMC and overcrowding
- In 2006, W. Haywood Burns Institute completed interviews with community and systems leaders to assess readiness for reforms
  - ▣ Recommended the consideration of alternatives to detention
- Detention Alternatives Committee formed to develop recommendations
  - ▣ Early focus group conducted by committee with parents and youth involved in JJS revealed need for community based and culturally sensitive responses

# Why Alternatives to Detention:

- **Ramsey County Community Leaders disturbed by:**
  - ▣ High disproportionate youth of color in system (DMC)
  - ▣ Increase in admissions and overcrowding at detention center
  
- **Ramsey County Community Leaders believed:**
  - ▣ Community could do better by youth
  - ▣ Communities of color shared common goal of wanting better outcomes for youth
  - ▣ Communities most impacted by system must be part of solutions

# Recommendations

## Detention Alternatives Committee

- Community CRITICAL
  - ▣ Minnesota adopted Community Engagement as a 9<sup>th</sup> core strategy with JDAI 's 8 core strategies
  
- Language *is* Important!
  - ▣ Coach is to Tracker as Learning is to Reporting ... in Ramsey County
  
- Community–Based Alternatives
  - ▣ Evening Learning Centers
  - ▣ Community Coaches

# Data

(re)Discovered and (re) Discerned

## □ **Profile of Youth:**

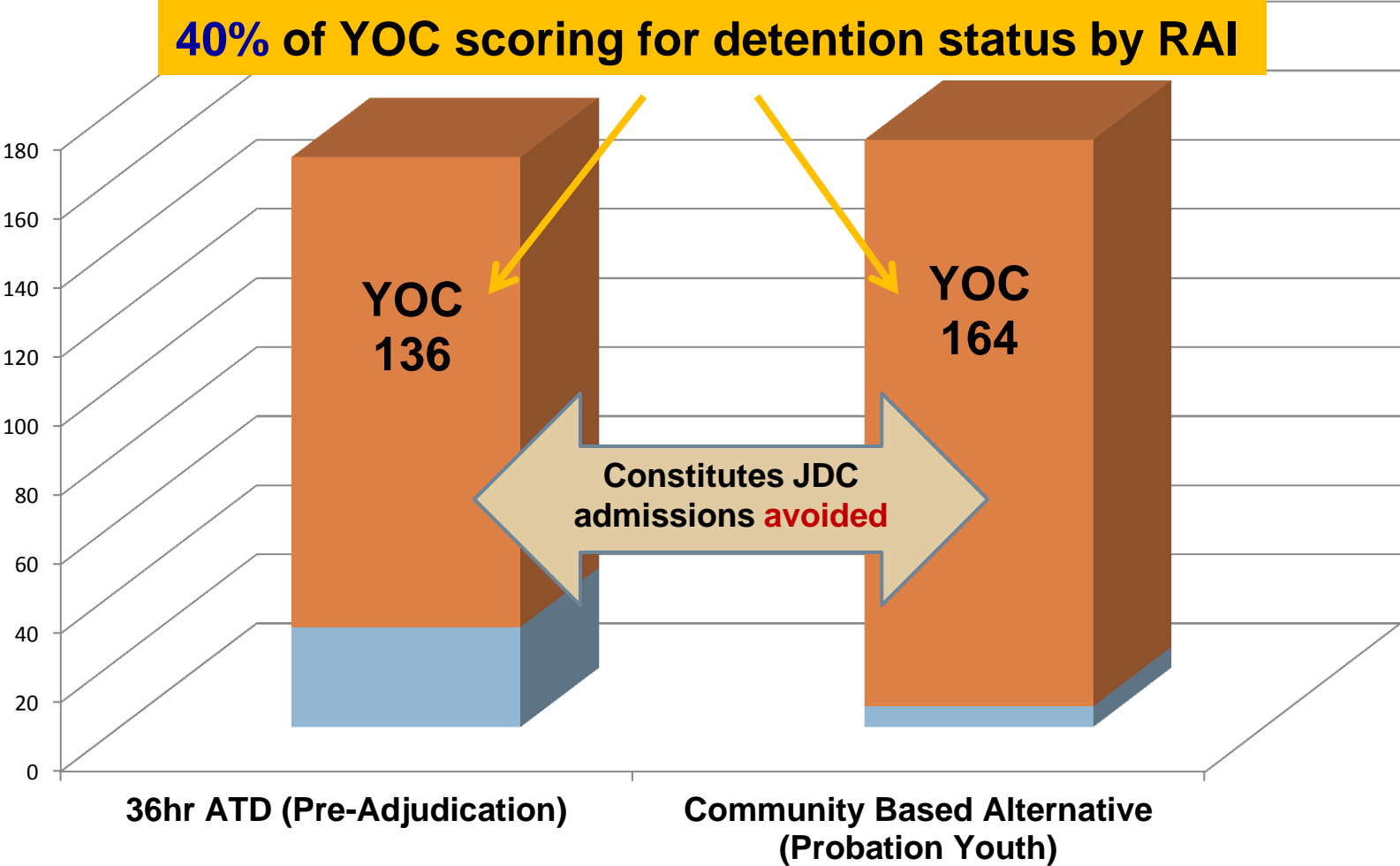
- African American
- Zip Codes → 55106/ 55104 /55117
- Average age = 16 years
- Non new offenses
- Frequent Flyers

**Community  
Engagement**

What agencies existed  
in zip codes where  
youth reside?

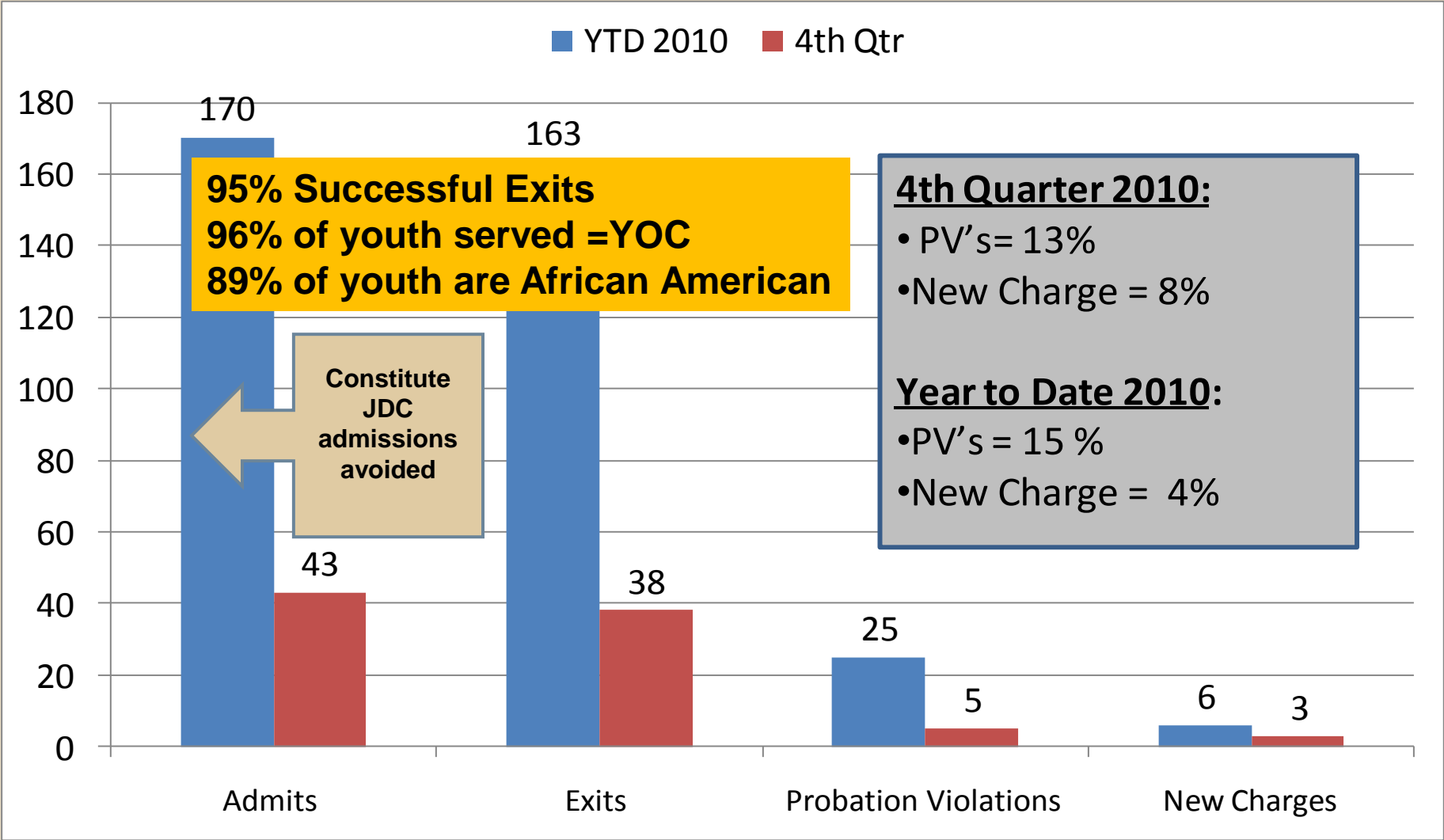


# Community Based Alternatives: Admissions



# Community Based Alternatives Outcomes (Evening Learning Centers & Community Coaches)

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# The St. Louis County Story



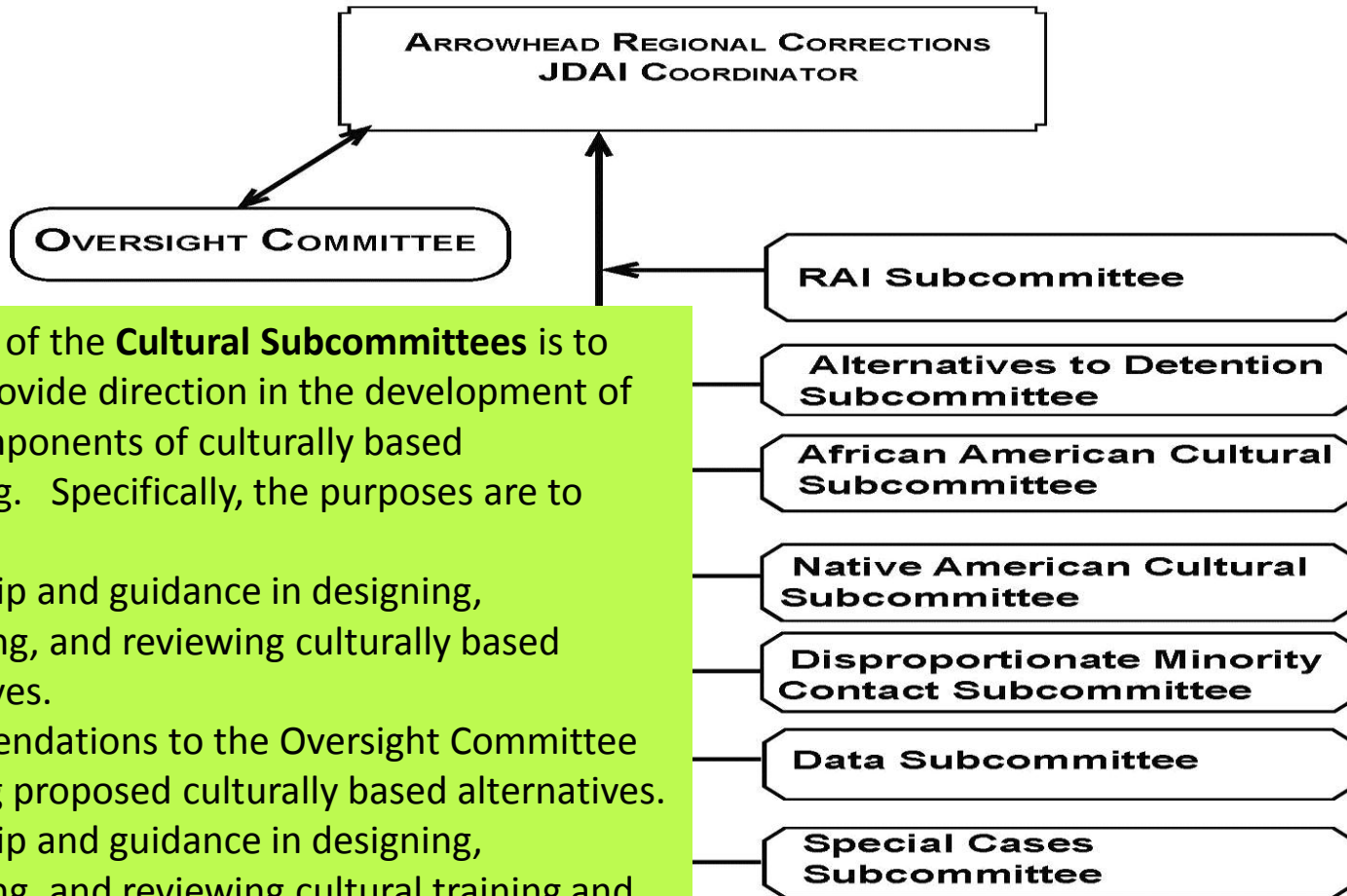
## Community Elders as Guides and Alternative Providers

*What I see happening to teens is connected to their environment – family, home - such as a nephew who struggled with drug abuse, I think he struggled because his dad couldn't raise him, couldn't provide for him. The child is a (Symbolic), a (spark), a concentrated message for family and community to read, reflect upon, and take as instructions for making change.*

*The Environment includes the spiritual – how they're feeling about their family, do they have support – are there grandparents, aunties around them – if they are in foster care have they been broken – where is the clan that their family is connected to.*



## JDAI COLLABORATIVE STRUCTURE



The purpose of the **Cultural Subcommittees** is to guide and provide direction in the development of the core components of culturally based programming. Specifically, the purposes are to provide:

- Leadership and guidance in designing, developing, and reviewing culturally based alternatives.
- Recommendations to the Oversight Committee regarding proposed culturally based alternatives.
- Leadership and guidance in designing, developing, and reviewing cultural training and anti-racism training.
- Recommendations to the Oversight Committee regarding cultural training and anti-racism training.

# Resources/References

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**W. Haywood Burns Institute**

[www.burnsinstitute.org](http://www.burnsinstitute.org)

**Ramsey County JDAI**

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